

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20

USIA-15 OMB-01 SAB-01 EUR-25 DRC-01 AID-20 /152 W

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R 181023Z JAN 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1212

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USINT CAIRO

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

USMISSION USUN

USMISSION GENEVA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 0295

GENEVA FOR MEPC DEL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJ: STATUS OF COALITION TALKS

REF: TEL AVIV 0217

1. ISRAELI DOMESTIC POLITICAL SCENE IN PAST WEEK HAS SEEMED SCHIZOPHRENIC, WITH POLITICAL PARTIES DEBATING AGE-OLD QUESTION OF RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RELIGION AND STATE AT SAME TIME THAT DISENGAGEMENT TALKS LOOMED OVER ALL OTHER INTERNATIONAL EVENTS. LABOR ALIGNMENT CONTINUED TO WORK FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF NEW COALITION ON SAME LINES AS AT PRESENT.

2. IN FORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH PRESIDENT KATZIR, NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (NRP) JAN 17 REITERATED ITS POSITION THAT IT WOULD NOT JOIN COALITION UNLESS NEXT GOVERNMENT AGREED TO AMEND LEGISLATION ON "WHO IS A JEW." (I.E. STIPULATING THAT CONVERSIONS TO JUDAISM BE IN STRICT ACCORDANCE WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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ORTHODOX JEWISH LAW). NRP ALSO DEMANDED THAT POLICY GUIDELINE

OF NEXT GOPNRNMENT NOT ENTAIL WITHDRAWAL FROM WEST BANK AND AGAIN URGED FORMATION NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT INCLUDING LIKUD.

3. INDEPENDENT LIBERAL PARTY (ILP) LEADERS TOLD KATZIR THEY COULD NOT ACCEPT CHANGE IN STATUS QUO ON RELIGIOUS CONVERSIONS, AND SUGGESTED ONE-YEAR TRIAL PERIOD IN WHICH NO CHANGES ON RELIGIOUS LEGISLATION BE INITIATED.

4. IN PUBLIC STATEMENTS, LABOR ALIGNMENT LEADERSHIP HAS INDICATED CAUTIOUS OPTIMISM THAT COALITION WITH EXISTING PARTNERS, AND POSSIBLY INCLUDING AGUDAT RELIGIOUS FRONT, CAN BE ACHIEVED. TRIPARTITE TALKS BETWEEN ALIGNMENT, NRP AND ILP ARE SCHEDULED TO BEGIN TODAY.

5. DEPUTY TRANSPORT MINISTER GAD YAACOBI (RAFI) TOLD US JAN 17 THAT AGREEMENT BETWEEN ALIGNMENT AND NRP VIRTUALLY ACHIEVED. ACCORDING TO YAACOBI, YITZHAK RAPHAEL WILL REPLACE WARHAFTIG IN CABINET, AND NRP WILL RETAIN THREE MINISTRIES AND ONE DEPUTY MINISTRY.

6. NRP LEADERS REPORTEDLY HAVE DISCUSSED WITH ALIGNMENT POSSIBILITY OF AGREEMENT ON BASIS FROEIGN POLICY LINES OF OUTGOING GOVERNMENT--I.E. ACCEPTANCE OF UN RESOLUTIONS 242 AND 338 AND PARTICIPATION IN GENEVA TALKS WITHOUT STIPULATIONS ON WEST BANK AT THIS STAGE.

7. INCLUSION OF ILP IN COALITION COULD BE AT EXPENSE OF ITS PARLIMENTARY BLOC WITH CITIZENS RIGHTS LIST, WHICH MAY PREFER TO BE IN OPPOSITION TO GOVERNMENT RATHER THAN COMPROMISE ITS POSITION ON ISSUES OF RELIGIOUS AND PERSONAL RIGHTS.
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